

CHAPTER 1: KINPIRA BURDOCK



...EVEN IF I WAS GOING TO TRY TO GET SOMETHING AT A REGULAR COMPANY, WE'RE IN THE MIDDLE OF A MAJOR RECESSION.

IT'S ALL FINE AND GOOD THAT I GOT MY PHD (GEOGRAPHY), BUT...
I HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO GET A POSITION AT A RESEARCH INSTITUTE OR A UNIVERSITY, AND...

IN HIS THIRTIES. STILL AT A CROSS-ROAD.

HARUMI TAKASUGI.

YOU SAY...

...I'LL REPLACE HER MOTHER, BUT...

SITAKE LAW &
LEGAL CONSULTANTS
SITAKE

SHE'S TWELVE. SHE JUST STARTED JUNIOR HIGH THIS SPRING.

HOW OLD IS KURURI AGAIN?

I DON'T KNOW. MIYA WAS A SINGLE MOTHER, SO—

WHAT ABOUT THE FATHER ?!

THE CORRECT TERM IS "GUARDIAN OF A MINOR."

I CAN'T!

IT WAS MIYA'S LAST REQUEST BEFORE SHE PASSED: IF ANYTHING HAPPENED, SHE WANTED HER DAUGHTER KURURI TO GO TO YOU, HARUMI.

HARUMI, YOU LIVE IN THE CONDO YOUR PARENTS LEFT YOU. SO THERE'S NO PROBLEM THERE.

THERE'S *MORE* THAN ENOUGH FOR HER SCHOOL AND LIVING EXPENSES 'TIL SHE REACHES ADULTHOOD.

KURURI WILL RECEIVE MIYA'S LIFE INSURANCE AND WORKER'S COMPENSATION.

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THOSE WERE MIYA'S INSTRUCTIONS.

I WORK PART-TIME...TOO MANY DOCTORATES OUT THERE. NO ONE WOULD ENTRUST THEIR CHILD TO A POOR SINGLE GUY LIKE ME.

**I-I CAN CUT
BACK ON MY
PART-TIME
HOURS.**

GULP

THIS IS A ROUGH
CALCULATION,
BUT YOU'LL BE
PAID ABOUT THIS
MUCH EACH
MONTH FOR HER
UPKEEP.

FAMILY

NOT YET

PLEASE
COME IN,
DEAR.
HARUMI'S
GOING TO BE
YOUR NEW
FAMILY.

KUUUUUUUUU-
UUUUUUUU!!!

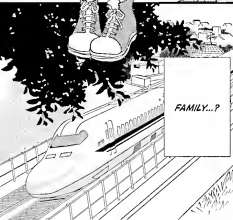
WELL, CONSIDERING THE FACT THAT SHE DOESN'T ACTUALLY HAVE ANY OTHER RELATIVES...

A character with glasses and a checkered shirt is shown drinking from a cup. The sound effect "SIP SIP" is written next to the cup.



SHE LOOKS
LIKE A
PORCELAIN
DOLL..

EVERYONE
SAID
MIYA WAS
BEAUTIFUL,
BUT...



FAMILY...?



BUT IN THE
WINTER OF
MY SENIOR
YEAR...



HARUMI (10) FORCED TO
DELIVER A LOVE LETTER TO
MIYA (15)

WE'LL
KILL
YOU IF
YOU
DROP IT

WE WERE
RAISED
LIKE
BROTHER
AND
SISTER.

MY AUNT MIYA
WAS FIFTEEN
YEARS YOUNGER
THAN MY FATHER

JUST SEVEN
YEARS OLDER
THAN ME

DAD, WHERE'RE
YOU GOING?
MIYA MISSED
THE LAST
TRAIN, SO I'M
GOING TO TAKE
THE CAR TO
GET HER.

I'LL GO WITH
YOU, HONEY.
HARUMI, YOU
GO AHEAD TO
BED.



GOODBYE
TAKE CARE OF
YOURSELF MIYA

MIYA DISAP-
PEARED.

I'M
SORRY,
HARU.

THIS IS
ALL MY
FAULT.

35 社会 12月 20日 読者

TAKASHI
TAKASUGI (42)

YANAE
TAKASUGI (40)

COLLISION WITH
NAPPING TRUCKER
COUPLE KILLED

JUNIOR HIGH STUDENTS, WELL, THEY GROW SO FAST. A FIT LIKE THIS IS JUST ABOUT PERFECT.

THIRTEEN YEARS SINCE MY FAMILY FADED AWAY...

...I'VE FORGOTTEN WHAT HAVING ONE IS LIKE.

TAKAMURA UNIFORMS

THIS OLD MAN'S BEEN RUNNING THIS SHOP A LONG TIME, BUT I'VE NEVER SEEN A GIRL LIKE YOUR PRINCESS HERE.

IT'S NOT LIKE THAT.

IF YOU'RE IN TROUBLE, YOU JUST WHISPER IT TO THE OLD MAN HERE.

HE'S HER DAD! IMPOSSIBLE! HE'S SO YOUNG AND THEY DON'T LOOK ANYTHING ALIKE.
AND IN THE MIDDLE OF THE DAY ISN'T THAT A CRIME?

ANYWAY, WE DON'T LOOK LIKE FAMILY TO ANYONE ELSE.

KURURI,
HONEY.

THE FACT
THAT WE'RE
NOT TALKING
MAKES
US LOOK
EVEN MORE
SUSPICIOUS.

CHECKERED SHIRT, BACKPACK, GLASSES. HE'S TOO SUSPICIOUS.

I'LL TRY
TALKING TO
HER.

YOUR
UNIFORM
AND THINGS
WILL BE
DELIVERED
TOMORROW.

MM-
HM.



SCHOOL STARTS NEXT WEEK

AND BY THE WAY, IT'S JUST....

KURURI.

AND BY THE WAY, IT'S JUST....

KURURI.



THIS ISN'T A CONVERSATION. IT'S MORE LIKE CHECKING OFF A LIST.

HONEY
x
IS CREEPY.

HONEY
x
IS CREEPY.



UM,
SUPPER...
SHOULD
WE PICK
SOMETHING
UP?

OH,
GOOD!



KINPIRA.

MIYA
MADE
SUCH
GREAT
KINPIRA.



OH?
UH!

WHEN I WAS
IN SCHOOL,
YOUR MOM
MADE MY
BENTOS FOR
ME.

...



"NEXT, I'LL
TEACH YOU
PUMPKIN."

-MOM

SHE
SAID,
BUT...

THAT'S
WHAT...

ALL
RIGHT,
GOOD,
WE'RE
TALKING.

YOU
PUT THE
SESAME
OIL IN
LAST.

THAT'S
THE
TRICK.

UH-HUH,
UH-HUH.

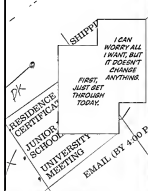
KINPIRA
BUR-
DOCK.

I CAN
MAKE
THAT.

MOM
TAUGHT
ME.

SHE'S
ACTU-
ALLY
TALKING.





BEAUTIFUL GIRL IN SCHOOL UNIFORM MAKING
BREAKFAST FIRST THING IN THE MORNING...





THE GOLDEN PATTERN ON OLD SOAP OPERA TV
昔の家族ドラマ
黄金パターン
YOU (IDOT)



*VIOLENCE IS NEVER THE ANSWER

WE'RE FAMILY, RIGHT? YOU DON'T NEED TO STAND ON FORMALITY.

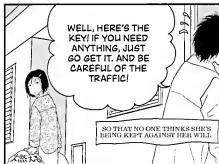
.....OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT. THAT'S WHAT THEY'D SAY IF THIS WAS TV.



BUT, I MEAN, I'M HER GUARDIAN.

I SHOULD BE SAYING THAT I'LL MAKE LUNCH FOR HER.







OH...
KAYAMA,
WHY'RE
YOU
HERE?

I TOLD YOU I
WAS GOING TO
BE WORKING
ON PROFESSOR
KAWASHIMA'S
WOMEN'S
UNIVERSITY
PROJECT.



THAT'S
STRANGE.

TAKASUGI,
YOU
BROUGHT
A LUNCH
TODAY?



JUST
'CAUSE
YOU
FOUND A
JOB RIGHT
AWAY...

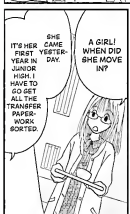
CLASSMATE!

YOU
DON'T
NEED TO
MAKE HIM
TEA.

KOSAKA!
YOU'RE A
SPECIAL
RESEARCHER
AND THIS
GUY'S AN
UNEMPLOYED
BUM.



I'LL GET
YOU SOME
TEA.



SHE
CAME
FIRST
YEAR IN
JUNIOR
HIGH. I
HAVE TO
GO GET
ALL THE
TRANSFER
PAPER-
WORK
SORTED.

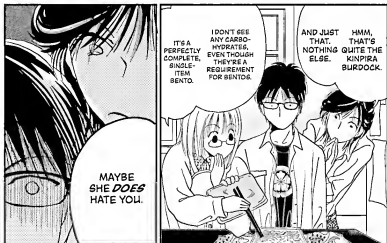
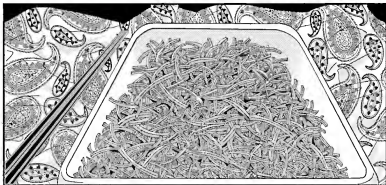
A GIRL!
WHEN DID
SHE MOVE
IN?



I TOLD YOU
BEFORE.
SHE'S MY
COUSIN.
SHE
DOESN'T
HAVE
ANYONE
ELSE, SO I
TOOK HER
IN.

SHE MADE
THE BENTO
FOR ME.

SO, YOU
FIIIIIIINALLY
GOT A
GIRLFRIEND?



**PAY CLOSE
ATTENTION**

READ
RELATION-
SHIPS
FROM PHE-
NOMENA
AND THE
ENVIRON-
MENT.

1941, 1942, 1943, 1944, 1945, 1946, 1947, 1948, 1949, 1950, 1951, 1952, 1953, 1954, 1955, 1956, 1957, 1958, 1959, 1960, 1961, 1962, 1963, 1964, 1965, 1966, 1967, 1968, 1969, 1970, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1974, 1975, 1976, 1977, 1978, 1979, 1980, 1981, 1982, 1983, 1984, 1985, 1986, 1987, 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025, 2026, 2027, 2028, 2029, 2030, 2031, 2032, 2033, 2034, 2035, 2036, 2037, 2038, 2039, 2040, 2041, 2042, 2043, 2044, 2045, 2046, 2047, 2048, 2049, 2050, 2051, 2052, 2053, 2054, 2055, 2056, 2057, 2058, 2059, 2060, 2061, 2062, 2063, 2064, 2065, 2066, 2067, 2068, 2069, 2070, 2071, 2072, 2073, 2074, 2075, 2076, 2077, 2078, 2079, 2080, 2081, 2082, 2083, 2084, 2085, 2086, 2087, 2088, 2089, 2090, 2091, 2092, 2093, 2094, 2095, 2096, 2097, 2098, 2099, 2100, 2101, 2102, 2103, 2104, 2105, 2106, 2107, 2108, 2109, 2110, 2111, 2112, 2113, 2114, 2115, 2116, 2117, 2118, 2119, 2120, 2121, 2122, 2123, 2124, 2125, 2126, 2127, 2128, 2129, 2130, 2131, 2132, 2133, 2134, 2135, 2136, 2137, 2138, 2139, 2140, 2141, 2142, 2143, 2144, 2145, 2146, 2147, 2148, 2149, 2150, 2151, 2152, 2153, 2154, 2155, 2156, 2157, 2158, 2159, 2160, 2161, 2162, 2163, 2164, 2165, 2166, 2167, 2168, 2169, 2170, 2171, 2172, 2173, 2174, 2175, 2176, 2177, 2178, 2179, 2180, 2181, 2182, 2183, 2184, 2185, 2186, 2187, 2188, 2189, 2190, 2191, 2192, 2193, 2194, 2195, 2196, 2197, 2198, 2199, 2200, 2201, 2202, 2203, 2204, 2205, 2206, 2207, 2208, 2209, 2210, 2211, 2212, 2213, 2214, 2215, 2216, 2217, 2218, 2219, 2220, 2221, 2222, 2223, 2224, 2225, 2226, 2227, 2228, 2229, 2230, 2231, 2232, 2233, 2234, 2235, 2236, 2237, 2238, 2239, 2240, 2241, 2242, 2243, 2244, 2245, 2246, 2247, 2248, 2249, 2250, 2251, 2252, 2253, 2254, 2255, 2256, 2257, 2258, 2259, 2260, 2261, 2262, 2263, 2264, 2265, 2266, 2267, 2268, 2269, 2270, 2271, 2272, 2273, 2274, 2275, 2276, 2277, 2278, 2279, 2280, 2281, 2282, 2283, 2284, 2285, 2286, 2287, 2288, 2289, 2290, 2291, 2292, 2293, 2294, 2295, 2296, 2297, 2298, 2299, 2300, 2301, 2302, 2303, 2304, 2305, 2306, 2307, 2308, 2309, 2310, 2311, 2312, 2313, 2314, 2315, 2316, 2317, 2318, 2319, 2320, 2321, 2322, 2323, 2324, 2325, 2326, 2327, 2328, 2329, 2330, 2331, 2332, 2333, 2334, 2335, 2336, 2337, 2338, 2339, 2340, 2341, 2342, 2343, 2344, 2345, 2346, 2347, 2348, 2349, 2350, 2351, 2352, 2353, 2354, 2355, 2356, 2357, 2358, 2359, 2360, 2361, 2362, 2363, 2364, 2365, 2366, 2367, 2368, 2369, 2370, 2371, 2372, 2373, 2374, 2375, 2376, 2377, 2378, 2379, 2380, 2381, 2382, 2383, 2384, 2385, 2386, 2387, 2388, 2389, 2390, 2391, 2392, 2393, 2394, 2395, 2396, 2397, 2398, 2399, 2400, 2401, 2402, 2403, 2404, 2405, 2406, 2407, 2408, 2409, 2410, 2411, 2412, 2413, 2414, 2415, 2416, 2417, 2418, 2419, 2420, 2421, 2422, 2423, 2424, 2425, 2426, 2427, 2428, 2429, 2430, 2431, 2432, 2433, 2434, 2435, 2436, 2437, 2438, 2439, 2440, 2441, 2442, 2443, 2444, 2445, 2446, 2447, 2448, 2449, 2450, 2451, 2452, 2453, 2454, 2455, 2456, 2457, 2458, 2459, 2460, 2461, 2462, 2463, 2464, 2465, 2466, 2467, 2468, 2469, 2470, 2471, 2472, 2473, 2474, 2475, 2476, 2477, 2478, 2479, 2480, 2481, 2482, 2483, 2484, 2485, 2486, 2487, 2488, 2489, 2490, 2491, 2492, 2493, 2494, 2495, 2496, 2497, 2498, 2499, 2500, 2501, 2502, 2503, 2504, 2505, 2506, 2507, 2508, 2509, 2510, 2511, 2512, 2513, 2514, 2515, 2516, 2517, 2518, 2519, 2520, 2521, 2522, 2523, 2524, 2525, 2526, 2527, 2528, 2529, 2530, 2531, 2532, 2533, 2534, 2535, 2536, 2537, 2538, 2539, 2540, 2541, 2542, 2543, 2544, 2545, 2546, 2547, 2548, 2549, 2550, 2551, 2552, 2553, 2554, 2555, 2556, 2557, 2558, 2559, 2560, 2561, 2562, 2563, 2564, 2565, 2566, 2567, 2568, 2569, 2570, 2571, 2572, 2573, 2574, 2575, 2576, 2577, 2578, 2579, 2580, 2581, 2582, 2583, 2584, 2585, 2586, 2587, 2588, 2589, 2590, 2591, 2592, 2593, 2594, 2595, 2596, 2597, 2598, 2599, 2600, 2601, 2602, 2603, 2604, 2605, 2606, 2607, 2608, 2609, 2610, 2611, 2612, 2613, 2614, 2615, 2616, 2617, 2618, 2619, 2620, 2621, 2622, 26



HE
WOULDN'T.
I EVEN
FORGOT
TO GO
SHOPPING,
SO ALL I HAD
WAS BEER.

HMM...WELL,
FIRST OF ALL,
WHAT ABOUT THE
POSSIBILITY THAT
THERE WERE
LEFTOVERS, AND
SO SHE MADE
THIS?

THEN SHE
WENT OUT AND
BOUGHT IT
HERSELF.

Have

ARE YOU
REALLY
READY TO
RAISE A
CHILD?

HAS A
CHILD

WOULD A MAN
LIVING ALONE
HAVE BURDOCK
IN HIS FOOD
INVENTORY?

AND THE CONVENIENCE STORE'S IN THE OPPOSITE DIRECTION.



I'VE
BOUGHT
THINGS
FROM HER
BEFORE.

AN OLD FARM
WOMAN
COMES TO
THE ARCADE
IN FRONT OF
THE STATION.

I KNOW!
MAYBE
THE
MORNING
MARKET.

THEY DON'T
SELL BURDOCK
AT THE
CONVENIENCE
STORE.

SHE WENT TO THE CONVENIENCE STORE THIS MORNING.

SO, SHE
WENT
HUNTING
AROUND AT
RANDOM FOR
GROCERIES?

SO HOW SHE CAME TO HAVE IT IS A MYSTERY.

THIS SUCKS
I'LL
HAVE TO
CHANGE



GOODNESS,
DEAR, YOU'RE
SOAKED TO
THE SKIN. DO
YOU LIVE FAR
FROM HERE?



A GIRL
THAT
AGE AND
BURDOCK?
WHY?



IT WASN'T
GROCERIES SHE
WAS AFTER, IT
WAS BURDOCK. IF
IT DIDN'T MATTER,
SHE COULD'VE
JUST GONE TO THE
CONVENIENCE
STORE.



OH! THAT'S
WHY THE
UNIFORM...

MOM
TAUGHT
ME.



KINPIRA
BURDOCK.

WHAT?
WHAT
DO YOU
KNOW?

RIGHT. THAT
TIME WE
WENT ON
THE AFRICAN
SURVEY
WITH THE PROFESSOR.

IT'S
JUST
LIKE
THAT.

OH!





AFRICA HUNTER/
GATHERER FIELDWORK

WE'LL STOP
HERE FOR
LUNCH.



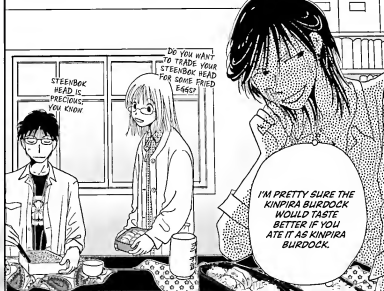
TAKASUGI, GYOMU
BROUGHT FOR
YOU WHAT HE
CONSIDERS HIS
PRIZED POSSESSION.
YOU MUST ACCEPT IT
GRATEFULLY.

THIS IS THE
HEAD OF THE
STEENBOK
WE CAUGHT
YESTERDAY.
THE HEAD IS
ONLY GIVEN
TO THE
ELDERS OF
THE GROUP.



I'LL EAT IT, WITH
THE TASTE OF
THE STEENBOK
HEAD IN MIND.

IN OTHER
WORDS,
THIS KINPIRA
BURDOCK IS...
THE
ROASTED
STEENBOK
HEAD.



STEENBOK
HEAD IS
PRECIOUS;
YOU KNOW

DO YOU WANT
TO TRADE YOUR
STEENBOK HEAD
FOR SOME FRIED
EGGS?

I'M PRETTY SURE THE
KINPIRA BURDOCK
WOULD TASTE
BETTER IF YOU
ATE IT AS KINPIRA
BURDOCK.



I'M SURE
THAT EACH
AND EVERY
PIECE HAD
SOME KIND
OF MEANING.



HARU!
YOUR
OBENTO!



I JUST
REMEMBERED,
ALL
OF A SUD-
DEN...

THOSE
DAYS WHEN
MIYA USED
TO MAKE MY
LUNCH FOR
ME.



I WONDER IF SHE
LEFT 'CAUSE
SHE COULDN'T
HANDLE LOOKING
AFTER ME
ANYMORE.

I JUST
GOBBLED
IT DOWN
WITHOUT A
THOUGHT.

MIYA PROBABLY
FELT LIKE IT
WAS ALL FOR
NOTHING.



HARU! AT
LEAST WASH
YOUR OWN
BENTO BOX!

AND ME...

WA-
WAH



I CHOSE TO STUDY
A FIELD THAT
UNRAVELS THE
RELATIONSHIP
BETWEEN PEOPLE
AND THEIR
ENVIRONMENT.

...I WAS
SEEING AND
EXPERIENCING
SO MANY THINGS
IN COUNTRIES
ALL OVER THE
WORLD.

I TOURED ASIA



I MEAN, I
WENT TO
AFRICA.

THAT MIYA
WAS BUILDING
A NEW
FAMILY WITH
KURURI...

BUT
IN THE
THIRTEEN
YEARS...



WHICH
IS WHY
THIS
TIME...
THIS
TIME,
FOR
SURE...

KURURI!

I LEARNED
TO FEEL,
THINK, COM-
MUNICATE.

I WROTE
ESSAYS.
I GAVE
ACADEMIC
PRESENTATIONS.



YOU DID REALLY WELL WITH THE KINPIRA. BUT I THINK THAT IN GENERAL, SOME KIND OF CARBOHYDRATE, MAINLY RICE, IS A STANDARD PART OF THE BENTO. WHAT DO YOU THINK?

とりあえず誉めて
あとはひたすら突っ込み

GIVE A COMPLIMENT
AND THEN ATTACK!

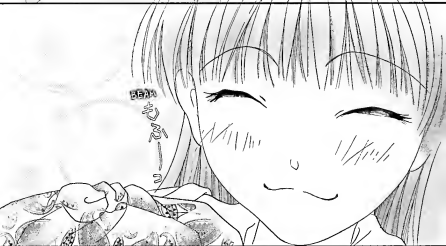
THAT WAS A
FASCINATING
PRESENTATION. I HAVE
A FEW QUESTIONS
ABOUT IT.

PRESENTER

THIS ISN'T AN
ACADEMIC
PRESENTATION.

OR A Q&A
SESSION





*SHE
UNDERSTOOD.*





...FAMILY.



THIS
FEELING
IS...



KURURI!



YOU CAN ONLY
COMMUNICATE
YOUR
FEELINGS
CLEARLY BY
PUTTING THEM
INTO WORDS.

NO, I CAN'T
JUST LET
IT SLIDE
HERE.



CLENCH

YOU GOT
SOMETHING
TO SAY?

言いたいことあるかい？



HM?

...
NOTHING.

IT'S...

...ON MY
BLOG.

**I'LL JUST
WRITE
ABOUT
TODAY...**